

Admissions – briefing paper

This briefing paper is for Academies (including Free Schools), Foundation Schools and Voluntary Aided Schools.

The schools listed above are their own admissions authority and must meet all the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code (the code) that came into force on 19 December 2014 except where variations have been written into individual academy's funding agreement to support fair access.

Main round admissions

The governing/trustees board (or a committee with delegated responsibility such as Admissions Committee) must on annual basis determine (i.e. formally agree) the admissions arrangements (i.e. Admissions Policy), even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. If changes are required the school must consult on the admission arrangements for a minimum period of 6 weeks between 1 October and 31 January. For example for entry in 2018 the admissions authorities must determine their admissions arrangements by 28 February 2017 and publish them on their website and send a copy to their local authority before 15 March 2017.

We recommend that the governing/trustees board (or committee with delegated responsibility such as Admissions Committee) meets in early September to determine the admissions arrangement and to allow sufficient time for consultation if required.

The role of Admissions Committee is to:

- discharge the functions conferred on it by relevant Education Acts and Regulations
- determine and review the admissions policy for the school
- rank all applications in accordance with the admissions criteria as determined in the admissions policy (this may be done through the local authority providing the admissions criteria don't include things like selection by ability or aptitude and the school bought into the service)
- ensure the school continues to serve the needs of the whole community and complies with the School Admissions Code

If the ranking of admission applications has been delegated to the Admissions Committee, we recommend a meeting is held in February for primary schools and December for secondary schools.

NB Admission authorities must allocate places on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, and a decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority i.e. the headteacher. This can be done by the whole governing/trustees board, or an Admissions Committee.

Requirements for notification and publication:

Paragraph of the code	Checklist
1.3	Own admission authorities including academies and free schools are not required to consult on their Published Admission Number (PAN) where they propose either to increase or keep the same PAN.
1.42 and 1.43	Admission authorities must consult when admission arrangements are changed or if they have not been consulted on within the last 7 years.
1.47	Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies and must publish a copy of the determined arrangements on their website displaying them for the whole offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made).
1.47	Admission authorities for faith schools must also send a copy of their arrangements to the body or person representing their religious denomination.
1.48	Where an admission authority has determined a PAN that is higher than in previous years, they must notify the local authority that they have done so, and make specific reference to the change on their website.

Clarity of definitions

Paragraph of the code	Checklist
1.32c	Admission authorities must take all reasonable steps to inform parents of the outcome of selection tests before the closing date for secondary applications on 31 October so as to allow parents time to make an informed choice of school – while making clear that this does not equate to a guarantee of a selective place.
1.6	The admission authority for the school must set out in its arrangements the criteria against which places will be allocated at the school when there are more applications than places and the order in which the criteria will be applied. All children whose statement of special education needs (SEN) names the school must be admitted.
1.7	All schools must have over-subscriptions criteria for each age group and the highest priority must be given, unless otherwise provided in the code, to looked after children and previously looked after children. Relevant age group means the age group at which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school, for example reception, year 7 or year 12.
1.8	Admission arrangements must include an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be

	separated.
1.11	Admission authorities must state clearly in their arrangements what they mean by 'sibling' (for example whether this includes step siblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children living permanently at the same address or siblings who are former pupils of the school).
1.14	Catchment areas must be designated so that they're reasonable and clearly defined.
1.16	If admission authorities decide to use social and medical needs as an over-subscription criterion, they must set out in their arrangements how they will define this need and give clear details about what supporting evidence will be required (for example a letter from a doctor or social worker) and then make consistent decisions based on the evidence provided.
2.8	If the school is not oversubscribed, all applicants must be offered a place, with the exception of designated grammar schools.
	Each relevant age group must have admission arrangements, including an admission number and over-subscription criteria. Some schools (for example schools with sixth forms which admit children into the sixth form) may have more than one relevant age group.

In-year admissions

Since September 2013, academies and free schools are able to accept in-year admission applications directly from parents.

An in-year admission application is one that is made outside of the normal time of transfer between schools, for example when a family moves house part way through a school year.

In Essex local authority still co-ordinates in-year admissions for all primary schools. Applications to secondary schools need to be made directly to the school. Secondary academies should say on their website that they are receiving and deciding in-year applications themselves.

The governing/trustees board may wish to delegate in-year admissions decisions to the headteacher.

The school must also:

- allocate places on the basis of the published over-subscription criteria
- inform local authorities of all applications and their outcome
- inform parents of their right of appeal against the refusal of a place
- comply with the code, paying particular attention to chapter 3
- participate fully in locally agreed fair access protocols (each local authority has its own fair access protocol)

Admission appeals

Any applicant refused a place at a maintained school or an academy has a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel established by the admission authority for that school. Admission authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by 28 February 2017.

Appendix 1

Admissions Committee – Model Terms of Reference

Delegation

The Governing/Trustees Board has established an Admissions Committee to:

- discharge the functions conferred on it by relevant Education Acts and Regulations
- determine and review the admissions policy for the school
- *rank all applications in accordance with the admissions criteria as determined in the admissions policy*
- ensure the school continues to serve the needs of the whole community and complies with the School Admissions Code

Membership

The Admissions Committee shall exist of not less than three governors/trustees one of whom shall be the headteacher. No member of the committee can be an Associate Member of the Governing Board (maintained schools).

Quorum

The quorum of the committee shall be three governors/trustees.

Procedure

The Committee will annually review the impact of all aspects of the school's admission policy and practice.

The Committee will consider any applications for main round of admissions in accordance with the school's admissions policy.

Where the Committee refuse a request from a parent for admission of their child the Committee will ensure that the parent is informed of their right of appeal against the decision and how that appeal may be made.

The Committee will ensure that where appropriate i.e. where changes are proposed to the schools' admissions policy, the consultation procedure is carried out at the appropriate time and with all relevant parties including the Diocese, the Local Authority and local primary including infant schools, pre-schools and nurseries.

The Committee will have full regard to the [School Admissions Code](#) and comply with all of the mandatory provisions of the Code.

Meetings

Meetings will be held on an as and when needed basis.

Minutes of all meetings will be taken and retained.

Decisions will be reported to the full Governing/Trustees Board.

Reviewed by EES for Schools Clerking Agency August 2016

Appendix 2

Model Agenda for Admissions Committee meeting

1. Apologies and reasons for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of business interests and gifts and hospitality

- a) To note any changes to be made to the Register of Business Interests.
- b) To receive any declarations of interest in relation to any matters to be considered during the meeting.
- c) To receive any declarations of gifts and hospitality received or given.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

To confirm minutes of the meeting held on [...].

4. Matters arising

To consider matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. Admissions 2017-18

To discuss and prioritise the list of applicants provided by the local authority against the criteria set out in the school's admissions policy.

6. Admission appeals timetable

To confirm the admission appeals timetable has been agreed and published on the school website as required by the School Admissions Appeal Code February 2012 (deadline 28 February every year).

7. Admissions 2018-19

To note that governors/trustees reviewed the school's admissions policy at the meeting of the governing/trustees board on [...] and agreed a change which was then consulted on, or

To note that governors/trustees reviewed the school's admissions policy at the meeting of the governing/trustees board on [...] and approved the policy without any changes.

8. Date and time of next meeting

To be advised.

9. Any other business

(Items to be raised under 'Any Other Business' must be notified to the Clerk in advance of the meeting)